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Rare, True, and Wonderful

RELATION,

OF A

TOWN

IN THE

PRINCIPALITY

OF

PIEDMONT

Within these few Weeks sunk under Ground, so as nothing of it appears, only two of the Inhabitants survive the misery.

With Philosophical, Historical, Political, and Theological Reflections upon the same.

Non est mutæ Naturæ rerum, sed undiq; loquax. Eras.

With Allowance.

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A Rare, true, and Wonderful RELATION, of a Town in the Principality of Piedmont, *within these few Weeks wholly sunk under Ground, so as nothing of it appears, &c.*

THings admirable seem much to be the enquiry of this knowing Age; it's only the Idle and Ignorant that stand poring over the Trifles of this dying World; much sooner may Eagles catch at Flys, than Learned and Experienced Men stoop below themselves, to wonder at mean and common things. We are now very happily got beyond those Times which made the *Mathematicks* Conjuration, and the Assertion of *Antipodes* to be no less than a Grand and Capital Heresie: Now only Things Extraordinary, such as are raised far above every days Observation, can be the inducements of Admiration; among which Number we may justly rank the following Relation, sent to this City by a Person of no mean Quality, residing at the Duke of *Savoy*'s Court: You may take his own words, as follow.

Turin April 8. N. S.

Some few days since happened a strange Accident to a Town in Piedmont, *not far from hence, the place is called* Bosia, *it suddenly sunk down into the Earth, so that neither House, nor any thing else hath since appeared; more than two hundred persons are lost, only two of the whole Town escaping.* W. S.

This is also fully confirmed by the *Gazette*, bearing date from *April* 21. to 24. I do not take this to be a meer Accident of Nature,

ture, but to be come to pass by the wise disposal of the Almighty Governour and Director of all Things, Causes, Events, or Persons in this inferiour Region: It was the undeny'd Opinion of the best of Ministers in the Church of Christ, in the most bright and first days of the Gospel, *That God by his Providence orders and manageth all things in this lower World, be they never so mean and ordinary*; much more those that are great, and awaken Admiration even in the wisest Men; which are therefore not to be slighted by Us, by *Us*, I say, *whom God made to contemplate and improve all his doings.*

Allow me therefore to befriend the less Intelligent, by discoursing a little upon this awaking Providence; its distance from us should not make us less sensible, but more thankful, than if it had been the miserable lot of some Neighbour Town, where, with an easie walk, our Eyes might have affected our Hearts. Here I'll attempt two things; *First*, to shew you whence such amazing Providences derive their Original. *Secondly*, give you some Moral, or Political Improvement of them.

First, To shew you whence they derive their Original, or how they come to be. This I'll shew you Philosophically, and Theologically.

1. *Philosophically*, (or Naturally,) I'll wave all extraordinary causes, because they are miraculous; I mean such as are performed immediately by the Divine Power, or by the Operation of Angels at the permission or command of God; and pitch upon two things as Natural causes, *viz.* either, 1. The violent force of those Vapors, or Exhalations, that war and contest within the Bowels and spacious Caverns of the Earth, put into a rage by some approaching heat, which for want of a convenient *Exit* make Towns and Countries tremble, and sometimes tumble into Ruines, and also utterly disappear. This is easily illustrated into the Experience of him that pleaseth to set before the Fire a Glass Bottle full of Water (especially if thick and slimy) closed with a good Cork well tied down; for as the Fire heats the Water, so the Bottle moves or cracks, if it do not fly all in pieces with a noise at one crash: So Water and Air mingled with Spirits, rarified by some approaching heat, either within the Bowels of the Earth, by an higher Ferment, or by Internal Flames; or without the Bowels of the Earth

by the Sun, do usually either break out by some narrower Passages, or else burst their way forth by violence and destruction, or at least shake their Prison in a manner competently terrible to those that dwell above it. This may be the cause. Or, 2. The thinness of the Earth, or Rock, upon which Towns are built; which may stand a great while but yet fall at length, without having any thing of an Earth-quake as its Cause, only make one as its Effect; as we see strong Walls of Towns and Houses crack and moulder down with length of age, or make a more speedy fall by some greater ruin, or knock, when weakly founded, or in a tottering case. So *Thrasymachus* tells us of one riding in his Chariot to the *Theban* War, who going over such a thin sort of Earth, the place broke in immediately, and beyond recovery swallowed up him and that which carried him.

2. *Theologically*, They derive their Original from the Almighty Will. *Job* 9. 5, 6. *This removeth the Mountains, and overturneth them; this shaketh the Earth out of her place, and the Pillars thereof tremble.* They come to pass as Predictions of God's Displeasure, or Executions of the same. 1. They very often predict the Displeasure of God: Though they are not always Predictions of this, yet they are usually. They give warning that God is angry; God is gracious and loth to be severe with Man, therefore this may gives him notice that he is displeased. *Psal.* 18. 7. *The Earth shook, and trembled; the Foundations also of the Hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.* *Pliny* testifies, That *Rome* was never shaken with an Earth-quake, but it proved the fore-runner of some great mischief to that City, and a certain Evidence of an angry Deity. The miseries of *Greece* by the *Peloponnesian* War was fore-told by an Earth-quake. A terrible Famine, and many other Calamities, were ushered into the World in the days of *Justinian*, by the shaking of the Earth, and the sinking of Towns. *Livy*, and other Writers among the *Heathen Romans* tells us plainly, That the Earth falling in, and leaving behind it a wide and terrifying Gulph, not far from *Rome*, the Oracle being consulted, told them, That it was an undoubted Signal of the displeasure of their Gods. *Plutarch* also in his *Parallels* gives us a resembling History. But to come much nearer our present Subject, the Author of the History

of this Iron Age ſays, That the late moſt bloody Wars of the *French* in *Savoy* were premonſtrated by an Earth-quake, ſo terrible as to overwhelm ſixteen thouſand Perſons. Or, 2. They are the Executions of God's Diſpleaſure. Of this we have one of the moſt eminent and greateſt Inſtances in the World, *Numb.* 16. in the Caſe of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, with thoſe that followed them. (See *verſes* 30, 31, 32, 33.) The Earth opened her Mouth wide, and ſwallowed them up alive with all their concerns; and this was purely the Execution of God's high Diſpleaſure.

Thus I have ſhewed you whence theſe things come to have a Being. I now come,

Secondly, To give you ſome Moral or Political Improvement, ſo as to bring this ſtrange Providence, and others of the like nature, into uſe for the advancement of Wiſdom and Holy Life, it was well ſaid by the Poet, *Felix quam faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* This improvement is what God looks for from us, as the reſult of ſuch Providences: *Iſa.* 26. 9. *When thy Judgments are abroad in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs.* It was a rare practice in the Emperour *Juſtinus*, who hearing of a terrible deſtructive Earthquake at *Antioch*, laid aſide his Crown and Royal Robes, and put on Sack-cloth and Aſhes, and lamented for many days. If he took ſo deep an impreſſion, no doubt but we ſhould take ſome, which is beſt done by a wiſe governing and managing our Enjoyments, Affairs and Lives; which, that we may do, I'll propoſe ſome few Directions, as pertinent to the thing in hand as my skill and leiſure will permit.

1. We are not to be fond of Towns and Habitations, nor too Ornamental in them. It's like this Town in *Piedmont* might ſeemingly be as well fixed and as durable as thoſe we inhabit, which now lies buried in utter deſtruction: Who then would be fond of houſes of Clay, whoſe Foundations are in the Duſt: But this is our common guilt, foſtered by our pride and forgetfulneſs: Worldly Glory, and Ignorance of our Duty, Mortality, and the Mutability of Earthly things, makes us run upon this Tranſgreſſion. The Divine hand hath ſometimes viſibly corrected Humane Vanity and ambition in theſe things; as in the Reign of *Theodoſius ſenior*, fifty ſeven Ornamental Towers, newly erected upon the

Walls

Walls of the Imperial City of *Conſtantinople*, were thrown down and deſtroyed by an Earthquake: Multitudes of the moſt lofty and ſtately Dwellings in the World, in many different Kingdoms, have been thus ruined. Thus fell the ſplendid Temple of *Apollo*, in the Iſle of *Delphus*: Thus fell once the glorious Cities of *Bithynia*, *Smyrna*, *Catana*, *Ferara*, and *Lacedemon*, &c. and many others of greater name. And for common Houſes to dwell in, we read they have been thus deſtroyed by hundreds and thouſands, in all Ages and Parts of the World, together with all the Houſhold Goods uſually, and with the very Inhabitants too often.

2. We are not to be too confident and ſecure in ſtrong Holds and Fortreſſes. Sometimes the Walls have fallen down and let in the Aſſailants; as at *Jericho*, *Joſhua* 6. 20. Other ſometimes the Walls have fallen down and deſtroyed the Defendants, even to the number of twenty ſeven thouſand men, as at *Aphek*, 1 *Kings* 20. 30. About the year 1590. a noble Fortreſs in *Caniſia*, in the Confines of *Hungaria*, contrived by the beſt Warriers for their retirement and ſecurity from their Enemies, divided in two by an Earthquake, and left thoſe that truſted in it to the mercy of thoſe that beſieged them. So *Tacitus* tells us, That in the fifth year of the Emperour *Tiberius* there fell out ſo dreadful an Earthquake in *Aſia*, that thirteen walled Towns and Cities were deſtroyed: So *Euſebius* tells us, That in the ſeventh year of *Trajan* nine ſeveral ſtrong Cities in *Aſia*, *Greece*, and *Calabria*, were by a like Earthquake laid upon a ruinous heap: So alſo the *Turkiſh* Hiſtory tells us, That the ſtrong Walls of the magnificent *Conſtantinople* were by the like means tumbled down, and made paſſable by the weakeſt Aſſailant. Thus you ſee that even Rocks of Braſs, contrived into a Fortreſs, founded upon this Terreſtrial Globe, are only to be confided in under the Divine ſecurity, and no otherwiſe.

3. We are not wholly to take Land-ſecurity for the beſt Inheritance or Eſtate. This (in the affirmative) is the ordinary Method of the moſt, but yet is far from infallible certainty, as I ſhall ſhew in two inſtances, becauſe—1. Sometimes this hath ſuddainly ſunk down and diſappeared. So in *Cherſoneſus* whole Pariſhes ſunk into the ground at once. About the year 105, many Mountains and Hills ſunk and diſappeared in the *Eaſtern* parts of

Eu-

Europe. In *Laconia* (before the *Lacedemonian* War, created by Slaves and Bond-men) the Earth opened in many places, and fell as into a Bottemleſs Pit. By ſome ſuch like way as this, in the time of *William Rufus*, Earl *Godwin* loſt all his Lands in *Kent*; and the *Flemmings*, in our *Henry* the Firſt's time, had their Patrimony in a great part of *Flanders* wholly ſwallowed up. Earthquakes have ſometimes removed two oppoſite Fields, and placed them in one anothers room, as thoſe two Fields in *Italy*, where the *Marrucini* were ſeated in the reign of *Nero*. But to cloſe with a ſtrange paſſage in our times, *A. D.* 1657. a parcel of Land in *Cheſhire*, not far from *Hampton* Poſt, was ſwallowed up, ſo as not to be ſeen again.—2. Otherſometimes this hath ſtart up and wandered away from the true *Proprietors*. As in *Lombardy* in *Italy*, an Earthquake, continuing forty days, removed a Town from the place where it ſtood a great way off. But one Inſtance more may ſerve, allowing me to be particular in it, becauſe of its ſtrangeneſs and fulneſs to my purpoſe; both Mr. *Camden* and Mr. *Speed* tell us, That in the Year 1571. in the County of *Hereford*, the Earth began to open at ſix a Clock in the Evening, and an Hill with a Rock upon it (making at firſt a great bellowing noiſe, which was heard a great way off) lifted it ſelf up a great height and began to travel, bearing along with it the Trees that grew upon it, the Sheep-folds and Flocks of Sheep abiding there at the ſame time: In the place from whence it firſt moved it left a gaping diſtance, carrying along with it about 26 Acres of Ground; paſſing along it overthrew a Chappel ſtanding in its way: With the like force it thruſt before it the Highways, Houſes, and Trees; it made Tilled Ground become Paſture, and turned Paſture into Tillage. Having thus walked from *Saturday* in the Evening till *Munday* Noon, it then ſtood ſtill and moved no more.

4. We are not to walk up and down the ſurface of this lower World, without a providential and divine Senſe, Care, and Awe; becauſe we trade and travel upon an uncertain and dangerous Earth, ſuch as may (for any thing we know) cleave aſunder and ſwallow us up; or at leaſt deſtroy us by its violent ſhaking: as *Lanquet* in his Chronicle tells us of thirty thouſand Perſons that were deſtroyed in *Jewry* 29 Years before the Birth of Chriſt, by a ſud-

sudden and terrible shaking. In like manner perished about *Puell* and *Naples* 40000 People, in the Year 1456. In the time of the third persecution Multitudes of Men were so dashed together by an Earthquake, as to be miserably kill'd, trading together, and endeavouring to help one another. We are not to be insensible, but live and act with a divine care; for few places in *England* but what have sometimes suffered by Earthquakes, and other-sometimes the whole Nation at once.

5. We are humbly to acknowledge the Power and Goodness of God; his Power in preserving us, his Goodness because we deserve it not; and also herein distinguishing between us and others. Thus in the days of *Bajazet* the *Turkish* Emperour, three millions of Men were destroyed about *Constantinople*, and whole Multitudes of stately Buildings, Churches, Towers, and the Emperour's Palace it self, did all suffer very much; whereas the Christians suffered little in their concerns, and not one of their Churches perished. The words of my Author are, *Templa Christianorum manserunt integra.*

To close the whole, see and imitate *Acts* 16. from 26. to 31.

FINIS.